

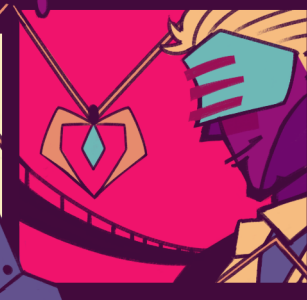
# COLORFUL BEGINNINGS



Ace Attorney



ZINE









# Green Ghost

By: Rae

It wasn't a conventional way to live. Surrounded by the dead. Once, when she was younger, Maya sat in her sister's lap and asked her if their mother was dead; it seemed fitting for her to die in a place full of ghosts. The one thing that Maya depended on, family, to have a rip in the seam, or a space in the painting. To have one thing missing. That was a common theme in Kurain; the home.

Maya had expected her sister to tell her that it was silly. The Master of the Kurain Channeling Technique didn't just die. They didn't become ghosts; not while they still had a place in the village, and a duty to serve. Not while they still had children to care for. No, their mother was not dead, but instead a hollow being for souls to take refuge in when summoned. While their mother was the Master, her body had that role to fill. As their aunt would say, it would be "irresponsible" to die whilst a job must be done.

Maya expected her sister to say this and reassure her of their mother's presence, but instead Mia just laughed and fiddled with the beads in Maya's hair.

Maya leaned into Mia, unsettled. She knew the laugh—it was the kind that delighted in the misguided, ridiculous musings of a small child. Their aunt often used it. However, while Mia's was much gentler and less condescending, it didn't do much to sooth Maya's childish musings. "Mother can't die," said Mia, answering one of Maya's questions. "Not while we're here, right? She'll come back for us, Maya, don't worry. She promised."

Maya just nodded and curled further into Mia's lap, focusing on Mia's humming in her ear. It would take her years to learn there hadn't ever

been a promise. Just empty words on her sister's behalf.

When Mia left Kurain, Maya wandered the halls and chambers of the place she had grown up in and felt lost. Her sister had been the only thing alive in the grave they both called home. The ghosts that had stayed locked behind closed doors had opened them; the ones that lurked in the shadows of corridors and candles suddenly leapt out. It was like a new building, a new...home. Nothing was familiar anymore.

But Maya learned. She was strong, and she learned to grow. She got used to the echoing halls and Mia's empty bed. She trained, learning to take Mia's place. She wasn't angry at her sister for this, of course. She knew that Mia had to do what she needed to do; and that was to save people, to save their mother.

When Maya had gotten that phone call and the promising exit of a train ticket, even just for a night, she told herself to ignore the creeping paranoia in her bones of the breathing on the other line that didn't belong to her sister. She had just spent too much time with ghosts breathing down her neck, that was all. Besides, she knew that Mia could take care of herself.

Maya had, of course, been excited to see her sister. It had been almost a year since they had last seen each other in person, so caught up in their own lives and too busy to make time. However, another part of Maya was glad that she could leave, she could finally step away from the chamber and onto a train where none of the passengers had any ghosts following them around. To pretend to be normal, that she was the little sister of a big sister, and they had a mom and a dad and no spirits to save.

It had been nice to pretend for those two hours.

When she arrived at her sister's law office, Fey and Co., she stepped in a puddle from the rain on the porch and watched the reflective droplets

to find another set of wet footprints, other than her own, leaving the porch. Mia had mentioned a meeting or something, maybe someone had come back to the office with her and got caught in the rain.

Maya unlocked the office door with her spare key (given to her by Mia a couple visits ago) and stepped inside, brushing off the last bit of rain. It was dark, which was unusual; typically, Mia was the kind of person to accidentally leave all the lights on. Maya furrowed her brow and called out, “Mia?”

No response.

Maya walked through the reception area and eased open the door to Mia’s personal office, nudging past the small drawing next to Mia’s nameplate that they both had done when Mia bought the place. This room was dark as well, and the growing, sharp smell of copper wafted into the small hallway.

The spirits had come.

When Maya found her sister’s body, the flashing green light from outside illuminated Mia’s office and Maya had to squint to see grimace on her sister’s face, frozen in time. A ghost.

She could feel it; the presence of not only Mia Fey, but of everyone, everyone in her life who was a ghost. It didn’t matter if they really were dead or not, not to Maya. Learning to contact spirits meant you had to make peace with your own.

The green from outside reflected shadows of water droplets on the window and Maya could see them on Mia’s skin, and then her own as she rested a hand on her sister’s arm. The line between reflections and the real things were blurred as Maya’s vision was, and she was screaming.

She didn’t remember screaming. Maybe she had thought it would scare away the ghosts, or perhaps bring them back to life. Bring them back so

they would stop leaving, stop dying, stop abandoning her and stop living in the rock she swore to always wear around her neck.

She touched Mia’s. Wondered if anyone was home.

Maya could feel the burn of the green neon light, blending her’s and Mia’s skin together, feel the stare of a thousand generations of ghosts staring at her, a new seat formed and taken by her sister; the glory of channeling, the curse of renewal.

It wasn’t a conventional way to live; surrounded by the dead. Maybe Mia had learned that. Maybe she stepped too far. The point of no return had been leaving Kurain, of thinking that she could leave her ghosts behind to chase after another.

But all Maya knew now was the green ghost lying before her, her skin pale and flashing, and a rock full of the dead around her neck.



TURNAABOUT SAMURAI



異議あり!

くらえ!





## Roots of a Poisoned Tree

By: Royal

Miles Edgeworth's world fades to black and white the second a gunshot echoes across the waters of Gourd Lake. The panic seizes him in its fists and shakes his vision until it blurs and the world can only be viewed behind a warped fisheye. Miles feels as if he's been thrown into the prologue of one the detective noir films his father used to be so fond of—none of this could be reality, could it?

A moonbeam glints off the barrel of an unfired gun and it winks like a silver star amongst the fog. The boat remains empty. Robert Hammond remains below the surface of the lake. Bile rises to Miles' throat. His world loses its grays and gives way only to blackness.

In Miles' mind, it feels only like a blink, and when he opens his eyes again, it's to face the blinding siren lights of approaching police cars. Huh. He doesn't know how he got to shore, nor how he managed to dial the authorities. The lights refract across the lake and he barely has the energy to frown at it.

Odd. Sirens are meant to flash red. Miles sees nothing.

"Sir!" a voice calls out to him.

Miles nearly keels over and dry heaves on the spot. An iron fist clenches around his heart at the thought of anyone he knows looking at him at this moment. If he didn't know he had to pay for his actions, he would sprint in the complete opposite direction.

"Sir!" Gumshoe stops less than a foot away from him, panting out his sentences. "I don't know what's happening but I can get this whole thing handled for you, pal. I'm sure there's been a misunderstanding—"



“There has been no such thing.” Miles’ voice sounds empty, even to himself.

Gumshoe’s expression crumbles into one akin to a confused and scorned puppy. “But—”

“If you cannot do your job, detective, then step aside so another officer can read me my rights,” Miles intones, flat and emotionless.

A flash of hurt crosses Gumshoe’s face, but then his mouth thins into a line. “I trust you, sir.”

“You shouldn’t.”

Gumshoe doesn’t say anything more, though the almost imperceptible opening and closing of his mouth tells Miles that he wants to. He turns his head and grits his teeth.

“Alright, sir. I’m sorry, but...” Gumshoe shakes his handcuffs from his belt.

The cold metals clinks around his wrists and the familiar sounds of his legal rights barely reach past the cotton in his ears. Right before he’s pushed into a car, something heavy settles across his shoulders. “You’re shivering, sir. I’ll need it back when we get to the detention center but for now it’s all yours, pal.”

Gumshoe’s coat, Miles notes. A small act of kindness that Miles would normally shirk, but right now all he can focus on is the fact that he can see the green in the threads. A muddy green. One that’s ugly any other day of the week except today—today when it stands stark against the backdrop of a black and white world.

Miles doesn’t say a word but pulls the jacket closer around him. Somehow, he knows Gumshoe understands that he is trying to say, ‘thank you.’

Thank you for the jacket, thank you for the ugliest green I’ve ever seen.

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Miles thought he’d spend the day leading up to his trial in the quiet and dull solitude of his jail cell. Phoenix Wright had other ideas. Of course he did. He hasn’t let Miles be since his impromptu return to his life, so it shouldn’t be a surprise when he’s summoned by Wright the morning after his arrest. It shouldn’t be, but Miles can’t help but figure that no one would ever want to associate with him anymore.

(Not even his guardian does—Miles has heard that von Karma is flying in to personally oversee the prosecution. Franziska will have his head for this as well. He wishes he could see her one last time before his inevitable guilty sentence—he would have liked to reconcile with her before that.)

Yet there Wright sits with his assistant and friend, taking in Miles’ harrowed appearance with pinched eyebrows and a downward pull to his lips. Miss Fey’s expression is similar.

Miles refuses to say much to them. It didn’t matter what they said. It wouldn’t change the fate that awaited him with von Karma heading his case. That, and Miles doesn’t want Wright anywhere near this case—not only would von Karma serve Wright a humiliating defeat, but that also leads Wright straight to that dreaded DL-6 case.

Wright adored Miles’ father when they were children. If he knew...Miles tries to wipe the image of Wright’s disgusted and betrayed face from his mind. No, Wright can’t know.

But no matter how many times Miles turns him away, he keeps coming back—a blinding light against the colorless expanse of the detention center. Then a little clink and something round presses against the plexiglass.

“Your attorney badge?” Miles whispers.

“Let me defend you.”

Those four words spark a match deep in his stomach. It spreads, settling in his heart for a painful and stinging moment before continuing its travel upwards. That’s when he notices just how gold the badge itself is. The wear and scratches dull it, but it still winks under the fluorescents’ glow. The tiny round object encased by large fingers reflecting from the plexiglass like a tiny sun amidst the gray watercolor night.

Miles would cry if his pride would allow it. It strikes him stark between his ribs: he hasn’t seen that specific color—that brassy gleam of an attorney’s badge—in years.

Maybe that’s why he places his life and fate so tenderly in Wright’s awaiting palms.

~

Please, anything but this.

“I would like to cross-examine Polly!”

Miles shuts his eyes and breathes deeply through his nose.

“...the parrot?”

Miles pinches his nose so hard that his fingernails leave indents.

“That’s correct, Your Honor.”

Miles slinks as far down his chair as propriety would let him. This is insane. Wright is insane. How desperate must he be for him to turn to such methods? Does he realize that he will never in his life be able to erase this from his record if he goes through with this? He’ll go down

in history as someone who, in his time of need, turned to a bird for aid. (Despite his indignation, Miles’ heart twinges at how far Wright is willing to go to prove his innocence.)

The bird is the most garish red Miles has ever seen and his mouth thins. Of all colors...it, of course, had to be this one.

“So...what’s your name?”

“Polly!”

Miles wants to crumple the color up and stuff it in his pocket so he wouldn’t have to look at it or feel the shame of the fondness that comes with it.

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The guilty will be punished—that is a simple fact that rules a prosecutor’s life. That is why Miles cannot walk out of the court knowing that, after today, his father’s murder could forever be unsolved if he didn’t confess. It’s best to accept the inevitable. If only Phoenix Wright would do that.

Instead, he requests a recess, bolts out of the courtroom, taking Miles by the shoulders on his way to the defendant’s lobby. Miles can’t bring himself to do anything except stare while the DL-6 casefiles flutter around his ankles as Wright scans every word.

The recess passes within a few heartbeats and, before Miles knows it, he’s standing outside the courtroom once more about to enter his second murder trial of the day. Spectators and members of the court filter through the open doors, muttering amongst one another.

He focuses on the haughty prosecutor parading himself as his heavy footfalls strike the tile in heavy gusts. Von Karma’s dark scrutiny falls directly on Miles but his stride never breaks. The wrinkles on his face



emphasize the snarl pulling his lips, baring his canines like a beast, and his beady eyes squinting in disgust. It lasts less than a second and Miles only has time to blink before his former mentor's back is turned on him.

A ragged breath squeezes from his lungs as the edges of his vision begin to blur and dim. Monochrome veils the crowd. Miles does his best to school his expression into one of apathy to save face. He hadn't expected the sting blooming from his chest—though von Karma's reaction is predictable.

It's done. Now people know the real crime at the center of this trial and there's no taking his admission back. He'd thrown Wright's efforts to the wayside and destroyed any remnants of relationship with his mentor and he...

Miles screws his eyes closed. Nothing can be done now.

"Man, what a peacock!" A voice next to him says. He jolts and turns to peer at Miss Fey's deep frown. She rests in a beat of silence before leaning towards him like she's about to conspire with him—her volume is anything but secretive, however. "He walks like he has feathers coming out his ass."

Miles chokes on air.

"Maya!" Phoenix reprimands.

"What? I'm right," she demands, a smug smile curling at her lips.

Miles almost laughs. It's the closest he's gotten in quite a while and, despite himself, his amusement soothes the edge of his anxiety. Miss Fey takes notice and her smile turns more genuine.

"He won't be that way for long thought, will he? We're going to beat him. Right, Nick?" She talks with all the confidence of a teenager and her words remain directed at Wright but her determined gaze never leaves

Miles'. Lilac illuminates from her very being.

A palm claps his shoulder and his attention is redirected to his other side, where Wright and Detective Gumshoe share similar gleams of resolve. Their confidence, as misplaced as it may be, cracks through Miles' defenses and makes him want to believe they're correct.

"Of course," Wright says. "Believe me, I'm always Wright."

Miss Fey slaps Wright's shoulder on his behalf. Miles is very grateful.

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Miles isn't entirely convinced that he's free until his world bursts into a bright ball of vivid confetti. The saturated rainbows rain down over him—a piece of red settles on his lapel, orange on the dip in his bangs, green sticking to the seam on his shoulder, blue slipping off the banister in front of him, and purple landing right on the creases of his left palm.

Wright and Miss Fey high five one another, the latter letting out a mighty "WOOP!" and the former laughing. Gumshoe's eyes gloss over and his broad shoulders slump over with a relief Miles also feels (though probably tenfold).

Then, as if cued, the three of them turn to him at the same time. Every face is filled with pride that reminds him too much of his father for him to react properly. Miles' breath releases shakily.

He's certain that they are the most colorful things in the room.













Mimi Miney

Ini Miney



REUNION, AND  
TURNABOUT





## Calor

By: Rowan

A part of Mimi Miney wonders if the candlelight illuminating Khurain Village's Channelling Chamber is more than just coincidence: if the warm amber glow of the flames that flicker along the walls and cast gold-tinged shadows that dance over the faded tatami mat laid out across the floor are the universe playing some sort of sick joke on her. Laughing at her. Taunting her. Or, perhaps, this is simply its way of punishing her. A little karma for the extra blood that's now staining her hands.

The Channelling Chamber is, admittedly, hauntingly beautiful; it's old and strange, the faded kanji etched into the wooden panelling in the walls practically unreadable even when engulfed in glistening candlelight. There had been a time, what feels like a lifetime ago now, when Mimi would have appreciated such a place even if she couldn't understand it. But now that golden light only serves as a bitter reminder of angry red flames and black plumes of smoke, billowing and curling into the sky, accompanied by the foul stench of petrol fumes and singed flesh that clung to her long after the fire was extinguished. There's no charm in this place. Only burning, white hot anger and two dead people: one a corpse and the other a dead woman walking.

Though perhaps, Mimi thinks to herself, that lack of charm has a little more to do with the lifeless body of Doctor Turner Grey, still twitching in a pool of his own blood that reflects the candlelight. His eyes are wide but unseeing, lips parted in permanent shock as the orange of the dancing lights reflect against a familiar shade of crimson on the floor. There had been blood that day too. Splattered over the dashboard and soaking into her clothes. Dripping from a deep gash in her left hand as she sliced it on a shard of broken glass in her desperate attempt to escape, adrenaline and sheer terror masking any of the usual pain.

Her palm bears a scar, long and thick. It still hurts, the memories it carries still too fresh and too painful to be fully processed with anything but rage – even if the wound itself has long since healed.

If anything, Dr Turner got off lightly. She'd wanted his death to be agonising and drawn-out, had wanted to watch him bleed out slowly from the wound in his chest, but fate seemed to have had other plans. In the end, it had been quick – not painless, of course, but certainly quick. Ini had not received such a luxury.

Mimi has no idea how long it had been between impact and her sister's final breath. If fate weren't so cruel she would hope that it had been instantaneous, that she hadn't suffered any more than Dr Turner did today. For a long time she had told herself that it had been mere seconds, that her sister didn't even have the time to process that she was dying before her pulse slowed down to a stop. But she could only kid herself for so long. By now, she knows better than to have that sort of faith in the universe.

A part of Mimi wishes she could say that the sight of the blood turns her stomach. She wishes she could say that she'd hesitated before driving the knife into her former employee's chest or flinched as she'd pulled the trigger and watched him collapse at her feet, his body bathed in the shuddering golden glow of the candlelight. No, all she feels is red-hot rage, burning brighter than it had ever done before as if pulling the trigger had splashed petrol over the flames. There's a part of her that knows she should feel guilty – and perhaps she does, deep down. Perhaps the twisting in her gut isn't some sort of sick satisfaction at finally seeing Dr Turner get his comeuppance. Perhaps it's not relief that after years of grief and resentment and burning anger, this whole ordeal has – quite literally – been laid to rest. Perhaps the flames roaring inside her aren't ones of anger but rather of fear and regret, burning her down from the inside.

She looks down at the gun in her hand, her reflection warped in its dull silver body, then at the red covering her hands and soaking into

into the sleeves of her disguise. Finally, she looks up at Morgan Fey, hiding her niece inside the clothing box with a cruel, icy look in her eye; she's focused and determined, her rage honed into something far colder than the white hot flames in Mimi. She looks poised. Fearless. Like she's done this a million times before and knows that she's going to get away with it. Mimi isn't sure if she should admire or fear that look, but she certainly knows that she doesn't like it. Doesn't want that cool ruthlessness to be something others see in her as she sees it now in Morgan Fey–

No.

She can't start having second thoughts now.

She takes a deep breath as she tries to ignore the all too familiar smell of smoke tinged with the metallic bite of blood that pervades the room and fills her lungs. Reminds herself that she's doing this for her sister – both as the woman who had lived before the crash and her false existence now. That, no matter the cost, this is what her former employer deserves. What Ini deserves. What she deserves. This isn't revenge as much as it is justice – an eye for an eye, so to speak.

It's then that Morgan Fey stands, telling her it's time to move onto the next phase of her plan. Putting on the façade of the loving, caring aunt as she steps outside of the channelling chamber once more. Mimi watches her leave, before her attention turns to the bodies in the room: Turner Grey, bloody and lifeless; and Maya Fey, tucked away inside a wicker basket amongst the linens.

Mimi has never spoken to Maya, but she looks young. The medium is barely an adult – certainly no older than Ini had been the night of the crash. How much of her life is still ahead of her? How much will she be robbed of when she takes the fall? Is it fair on her to suffer the consequences of others' actions?

Or, Mimi wonders, is this just the price one has to pay for revenge; a necessary evil in the pursuit of justice?



The seconds that pass feel like hours, and by the time she makes to leave the chamber her eyes have become all too accustomed to the sight around her. The flames enveloping the room cradle Mimi in a glowing warmth and the stench of smoke that's tinged with copper and rot, the beauty of the channelling chamber sullied permanently by the blood soaking into the tatami mat.

Maybe one day the flames will die down, leaving behind only a trail of ashes and destruction as their anger fizzles out into regret. Or maybe they'll burn on forever.

Which is better, Mimi doesn't know.











## Her Eyes

By: Jess

For the spring semester of his junior year at Ivy University, Phoenix decided to take a class focused entirely on portrait drawing. Admittedly, the idea of it was pretty intimidating to him at first, considering that his specialty beforehand was mostly abstract, so jumping into realism maybe wasn't the best idea. But he quickly found himself enjoying the process, even though he had to practice quite a bit in order to get certain features right, especially eyes.

His teacher had once said that a person's eyes could tell a lot about what they were like as a person, and Phoenix found himself agreeing with her. On occasion, he'd sketch a few of his friends, to get a bit of extra practice in, and he noticed that most of their personality showed in how their eyes looked at any given time. His friend Larry's were often close-lidded and relaxed, even a bit bloodshot at times. One of his classmate's eyes seemed to always have a bit of eyeliner smudged around them, or stray bits of glitter in the corners. And whenever he caught a glimpse of his own eyes in the mirror, the first thing he noticed was just how deep-set they were, with dark circles hanging underneath.

Before long his little portable sketchbook was absolutely filled with crude doodles of eyes. And not just stationary, emotionless eyes either. He drew eyes surrounded by smile and laugh lines, eyes overflowing with tears, and even a few eyes rolling backwards in exhaustion. Phoenix kept on drawing eyes until he was sure he could draw one blindfolded in perfect detail. Now, whenever he made any kind of eye contact his mind immediately started thinking of the ways a pencil stroke could capture the hooded lids of the cashier at the corner store, or the eyelash extensions of a girl he walked past on the street, or the glass eye of the old man who wished all the students a good day.

About two months into the semester, his teacher had deemed the class



worthy of doing portraits in color. Phoenix was excited. Right after the teacher dismissed them he practically sprinted over to the local art supply store to buy all the colored pencils he could get his hands on. Once again, he filled his sketchbook with eyes, determined to capture the exact colors of each in a way that he felt did them justice.

Phoenix often found himself getting lost in the dimensions of color many people didn't realize their eyes even had. There was nearly an endless variety of blues, some deep and concentrated like the ocean, others bright and intense like a clear sky, still others muted and subtle like stone. Once, he'd found a steely gray among the sea of blues, and he couldn't stop thinking about it for the rest of the day (he could never put his finger on why). And, of course, he sketched out plenty of kaleidoscopic hazel eyes, colored plenty of amber rings around pupils surrounded by earth tones, but the "plain" brown eyes quickly became his favorite to draw. He experimented with layering different strokes of colored pencil, different amounts of pressure on the paper, even using gold leaf at one point.

His girlfriend Dahlia glanced inside his sketchbook one day, when he'd left it open on his dorm room desk. She asked why there were so many drawings of eyes in it, holding up the page like it was a list of instructions to some kind of Satanic ritual.

"Oh, uh," he stammered, "those are... those are for practice."

"Practice..." She looked back at the sketchbook she was holding. One of her thumbs rested on a sketch he'd colored in just a few hours before, and when she moved it, the pad was covered by a smudge of dark brown. "You know, you can just draw my eyes if you need so much practice."

"Really? You wouldn't mind me staring at you like a crazy person?" he asked.

Dahlia giggled in that coy way that never failed to make his heart melt. "Of course I wouldn't. After all, it's just you."

And that's how Dahlia's eyes gradually began taking up more and more space in Phoenix's sketchbook, to the point where he had to go back to the art supply store to get a new one. On the surface, one might find this odd, since they were just a deep, dark brown that could be mistaken for black from a distance, which wasn't too out of the ordinary when it came to eye colors. But Phoenix strongly disagreed. Dahlia's eyes were the most extraordinary dark brown he'd ever seen. The exact color almost reminded him of chocolate or coffee, with a sort of warmth that suggested there was some kind of flaming ember hidden beneath the brown. He'd worn down three different colored pencils trying to get them exactly right, forming circular valleys in his sketchpad. One day, when he was feeling particularly adventurous, he tried filling in the color with ink instead of colored pencil, but it still didn't come out quite the way he wanted. It was a good thing he wasn't working with paint, or else he'd be mixing for hours and hours on end.

His academic advisor once told him that he had a strong "perfectionist streak" and he'd brushed them off. Now, the countless copies of his girlfriend's eyes proved them right.

Even as Phoenix stood behind the witness's stand, telling a room full of people that there was no way he killed Doug Swallow (even if he was kind of an asshole), Dahlia's eyes were all he could think about. The thought of at least being able to look into them again was what kept him hopeful that everything would be okay.

But then, when she finally arrived to assure everyone that he was telling the truth, he noticed something. As he looked into her eyes, like he had so many times before this moment, he couldn't see any of the warmth he noticed so often. Instead he just saw a deep, deep void, as if her pupils were so dilated that they were all he could see.

That was fine. Someone's pupils being dilated meant that they liked you, right? Right?

Phoenix couldn't see the minute details of Dahlia's eyes from the

defendant's chair, but he didn't need to. Her eyes weren't the only thing about her that became unrecognizable that day. His defense attorney really was doing a remarkable job of bringing harsh truths about her to light, including that she had even intended to kill him with the very medicine he thought she'd bought out of the goodness of her heart.

He definitely couldn't look into her eyes at all now.

Little by little, any and all familiar aspects of her started to flake and chip away, until the woman at the witness stand was practically a stranger. One with a tangible and potent hatred in the creases of her brows that Phoenix hoped he'd never encounter again.

The verdict was handed out and the entire courtroom started to cheer on his behalf, but the only thing Phoenix could think about was the sketchbooks full of eyes he'd left in his dorm room.

Before he left the courthouse, he had a brief conversation with his defense attorney, whose name he now knew was Mia Fey. He found himself fixating on her eyes out of habit (they were a similar shade of brown to what he thought Dahlia's looked like, with hair-thin stress lines forming in the outer corners), even as she was telling him that he'd be better off putting this entire situation behind him.

After Mia handed him a piece of paper with her professional email address and phone number written on it, to keep as a reference once he'd eventually graduated, Phoenix left the courthouse, dialing his best friend's cell phone number as he walked down the marble steps.

"Hey, man, how'd the trial go?" Larry answered.

"I was acquitted of all charges."

"Is that bad?! You know I don't know lawyer-ese or whatever it's called!"

"No, no, it's good, don't worry." He paused for a moment, once again

thinking about the sketchbooks full of eyes in his dorm. "You know what, I think I might be down to have a little bonfire tonight. Just to celebrate."

"Sounds dope, man. I'll call up the boys, grab some supplies, and we'll all meet up at the fire pit at around 5-ish."

"See you then."

Phoenix spent the next hour getting rid of every trace of Dahlia Hawthorne he could find. He deleted all of her texts and photos of them on his phone, put all of her many, many presents and books she encouraged him to buy in a box to take to the thrift store, and lastly, tore every single drawing of her eyes out of his sketchbook. The sound of paper tearing from the metal spine was like white noise to him, and when he finished, there was quite a sizable pile of it in front of him.

It would definitely make good kindling for a fire.





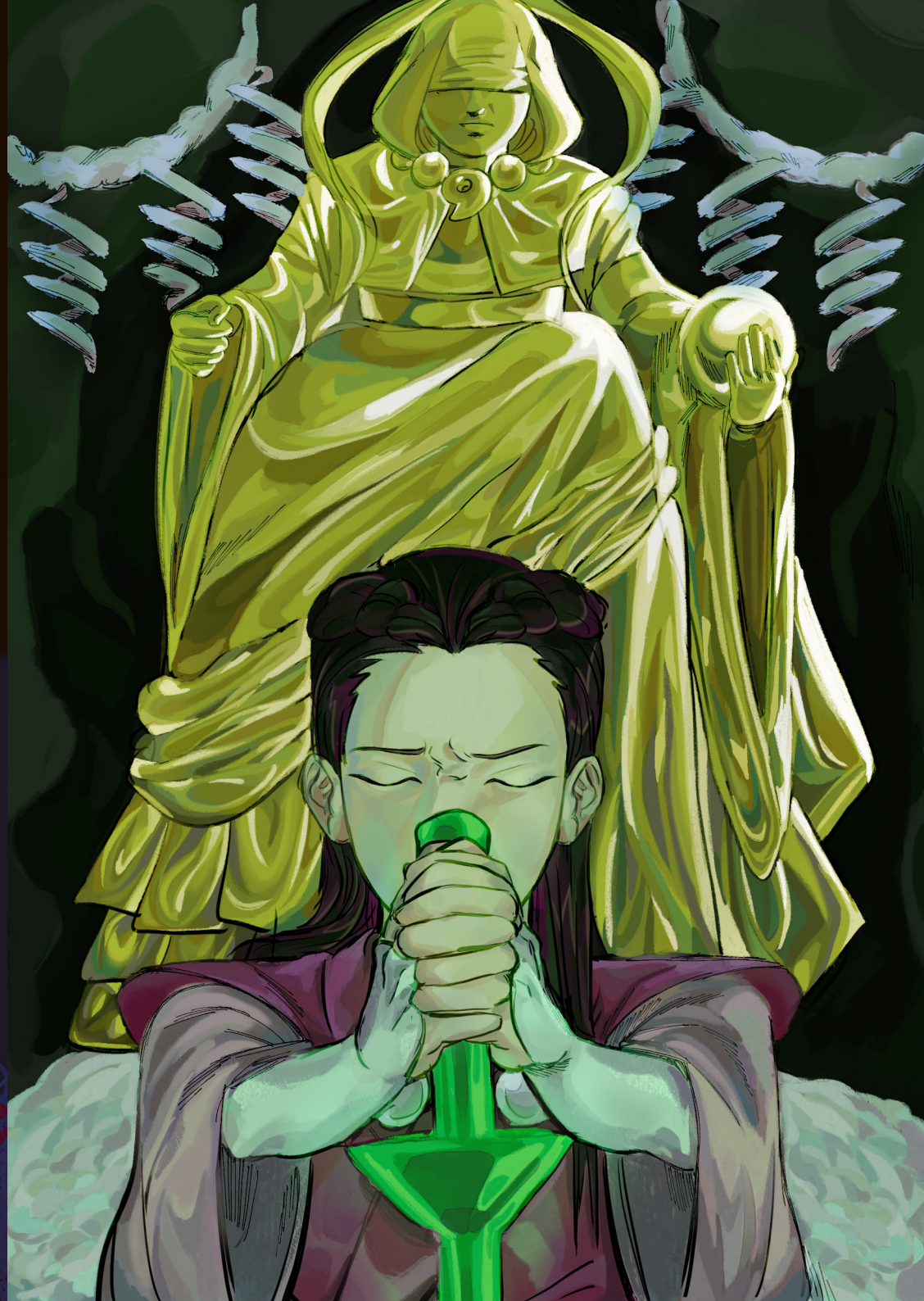














# A Dozen Red Lead Sinkers Round My Neck

By: Pidge

Godot doesn't really consider himself an angry kind of guy.

Thing is, before the whole assault-battery-murder-poison situation, he wasn't actually much for red. Sure, he wore it, but his mamá had told him that he had a face for red, that it brought out the color of his eyes, and habits are hard to break once you've been wearing the color for a couple decades.

Nowadays, he just kind of hopes for the best, when it comes to color.

He doesn't really understand the thing on his face. It's a complete corneal replacement, they'd told him, that connects to the optical nerve, or something, blah blah. It had given him splitting headaches for a month until they'd figured out how to get it to show any color other than red, except now it can't even register red and still gives him splitting headaches, which is why the investigation is going exceedingly poorly by the time the baby lawyers show up.

Phoenix Wright isn't exactly an enigma to Godot. Boy shows up, some blue-clad kid claiming he's the defender of the innocent? Fine, whatever, he's got a savior complex a mile wide and he's hit the lawyering sweet spot between "dumb as a rock" and "so dedicated to justice it's almost pretentious" that makes him likeable to anyone else.

Diego might have befriended Phoenix Wright, once upon a time. Said things like you're sharp as burnt espresso and meant them in a nice way.

Godot, though. Godot has no intention of befriending the boy who let Mia Fey die.

He's not an angry guy. But Phoenix Wright? Phoenix Wright makes him angry, so furious that if only he could see red, he's sure his vision would be clouded over with it. There's an implacable burning rage inside him that wants him to lift the kid up by his lapels and toss him into the ravine, or better yet, to find some way to make this boy feel the way he felt when his only love was ripped from him. That aching, all-consuming, relentless grief, and the knowledge that the last time he'd ever seen her was still somehow years ago. Time travel is real, and Godot knows, because Diego died seven years ago and Godot woke up in a dead man's body. Phoenix Wright tastes not sharp but bitter as burnt espresso in his mouth.

It's for this reason, probably, that Godot can't stop himself. He lets the red-or-lack-thereof wash over him completely as he delivers Wright the news: Maya Fey is dead. He's left her little cousin alone, now: no mother, no big cousins, nobody but Wright left for her. Privately, Godot thinks: if he has his way, if he gets out of this unscathed and un-indicted, he's going to make sure this so-called attorney sees justice for his inaction. Publicly, Godot resists the urge to punctuate his sentence with a punch instead of a period, and stalks off to the cavern.

The lock keeping the gate shut is the same mid-grey as his visor, and he sits next to it for a second, tilting his chin upwards so the visor clinks against it. The dials don't have any mechanism he can see to pick them. Turning them had given him none of the familiar clicks that you'd use to pick a standard dial lock. He couldn't pry them off, and Gumshoe's apparently-ever-present bolt cutters didn't do anything, either.

Frustratingly, he's helpless, and with two other prosecutors plus that blue-clad idiot roaming the scene plus the police he'd gone to the hard work of mobilizing, he heads instead to the little cabin run by the nuns. No use freezing out here.

---

It takes Godot a while to get to the Sanctum after the earthquake. The



nun had been badly shaken, after all-- she hadn't been able to sit quickly enough, and had taken a nasty fall, and her back was in pretty bad shape. It's probably a prosecutable offense to leave her there, so instead he helps her to her feet and ushers her to her room. He's just helping her lie down when she pales.

"The Inner Sanctum," she whispers, horror-stricken. "Mystic Maya is stuck there, oh, oh Holy Mother--"

Godot gets to his feet. "I'll make sure she's all right," he promises.

It's not long before he's standing in front of the gate, which now sports five locks and a dark-haired nun frantically trying to fiddle with them. "Mr. Godot," she gasps out, seeing him. "I don't know what happened, these just-- suddenly appeared!"

It's not a very good lie, but he has bigger things to deal with. "Just get the damn hunks of iron off," he growls.

"I'm trying," she says, in a tone that's almost a snap. An elastic band of memory pings in the back of Godot's head, something he thinks was probably important, but he can't quite grasp at the recollection before it vanishes again into the pulsing of his headache. Goddamn, he needs an aspirin.

Not trusting himself not to fall into the red-hot throb of anger, he settles for a curt nod and stalking across the bridge.

---

In court is when Godot realizes exactly what he'd forgotten, when he forgot all but the barest recollection of the color red.

It takes... some time to click. He can barely remember what Dahlia Hawthorne looked like, at first: perhaps it's some defense mechanism his mind has put in place, or maybe it's just his brain washing out any

memories of her crimson hair and pink dress. He remembers her, and her actions, and her crimes, but her image in his head is as mercurial as a summer breeze.

Naturally, it's Phoenix goddamned Wright who exposes his murderer to the court, and his stomach cramps reflexively as the recollections rush back. He wants to run or scream or-- do something equally illogical. Instead, he freezes solid, as if his body has decided to return to its comatose state, or some horrifying waking-sleep paralysis.

For a second, the memory of blood-red hair superimposes itself so vividly he can almost taste iron.

It's... strange. Dream-like, the way Godot fights his way to the next recess. He can barely feel his fingers. The gash above his eye stings and stings in the sweat beading under his visor. The words he can barely hear himself say feel numb in his mouth. Every bone, every blood vessel, every molecule of his body is focused in on the demon standing on the pulpit, preaching its plan of systemically wiping out the Fey family.

It's strange, because somehow he completely forgets about the fact that he is, in fact, the guilty party until she's being banished in a total maelstrom clusterbomb of color and horror. It hits him like a truck as he's watching her implode and get sucked into herself like a black hole: it would have been awfully convenient to blame this on a ghost, and he missed his chance. He's helped clear the Fey girl of suspicion, but now Wright is going to go sniffing for new suspects, and for all he knows, that cut on his eyebrow could have left a bloody trail straight to him. And:

The more Wright does, the more Godot feels the *deja vu*. The way he tosses his head, flicks his wrist as he points, slams an open hand down and leans over the desk. He can barely keep track of the actual points Wright's making, because all he can think is: he looks like Mia.

For a second, just as vivid as the recollection of red: Mia's figure, standing ghost-pale beside Wright. The *deja vu* collapses into that single



instant, a flare of realization:

She's living on through him.

In the end, it's Godot who crumples, then.

He doesn't like giving up. But he knows Wright's already figured it out. The coffee beans that crush easily are the ones that taste bitter, but the ones that don't break never transform into the ultimate expression of themselves, and he finds himself realizing: he wants Wright to know. He wants Wright to know exactly why he hates him, and why he had to do what he did.

Without even knowing it, he was compensating for his inability to see red by seeing red: projecting his own fury and helplessness onto everyone around him. He thinks... he thinks he can realize that now. He thinks that's what Mia would have said, and Mia was always right, anyway. Everything's drained out of him, all the fury and the headache and the need to fight.

It's okay. It's all okay now. He'll never see the color red again, but he doesn't think it's necessary anymore. The world could be grayscale and he wouldn't care.

Maybe, he reflects, it's time to consider the possibility of some other colors.






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